

PutterZone

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[GEL Emerald Putter Review](#)

GEL Golf is making a statement not only with its putter groove technology, but also with its groovy brand colors, specifically powder blue and yellow with an occasional touch of pink.

Is it just a matter of style over substance, or rather form celebrating function? Following is PutterZone.com's review of the GEL Emerald model putter (\$165).



The Storyline

GEL stands for Groove Equipment Limited. The company was founded by Alec Pettigrew, entrepreneur and former CEO of Yes! Golf Asia Pacific.

GEL is hardly the first proponent of putter face grooves, but the company claims to have taken groove technology to the next level. Each GEL putter incorporates aluminum insert with a series of finely milled saw-like grooves engineered to minimize skidding and hopping, and thus to initiate true roll more quickly for straighter putts.

Face grooves are a somewhat controversial topic in the putter industry. Some swear by them, others say they're a non-factor, suggesting that roll is more a factor of putter loft, green conditions, player skill and other factors. Nevertheless, GEL has produced test results showing that the ball achieves steady forward motion earlier with the Emerald than with several familiar competitors. According to the company, the test was conducted independently by Quintic Sports Group.

GEL putters tend to be heavier than standard putters. The Emerald's head weight is 400 grams, which is 50 to 65 grams heavier than most putters. The Emerald is a face-balanced putter made from 431 stainless steel with a black nickel finish. The loft is 2.5 degrees. The face insert is powder blue with white trim, and the grip features thick horizontal striping of powder blue and yellow. The head cover is yellow and black with powder blue trim.

The View from PutterZone.com

I've had the GEL Emerald for some months now. GEL Golf's public relations staff has done an excellent job of spreading the news about its putters, but distribution and availability have been slow to materialize in the United States. Since I don't like to review putters that readers of PutterZone.com will have trouble finding, I really hadn't paid the putter much attention.

However, GEL continues to push forward and is clearly here to stay after a strong showing at the 2008 PGA Merchandise Show. So I recently dusted off the Emerald, gave it a workout and was unexpectedly dazzled by the experience.

The design of the Emerald is unconventional and edgy. It's an approach that easily could have gone wrong, but GEL managed to do it right, successfully hybridizing the visual and performance attributes of both a blade and a mallet.

By today's standards, the head isn't large. In fact, the top line of the blade portion is barely thicker than the shaft. The back-weighted rear is also relatively slim at a width of 1.5 inches. The shaft is mounted at the heel with no offset, creating visual harmony between the eyes, hands and putter head. The overall effect is one of sleek, modern minimalism that helps maintain your focus on what counts.

The Emerald's proprietary insert is buttery yet responsive, and the audio feedback is congruent with the feel of the putter. Better yet, miss-hits are gently communicated, and the head firmly resists twisting when struck off center. You know when you've erred with the Emerald, but your sin goes largely unpunished.

In my hands, the heavier 400-gram head is just enough to aid stroke smoothness without veering into distraction or imbalance. And, as promised, the ball rolls beautifully off the face. I can't say if this is due to the grooves, and I'm not sure if I care. All I know is that the Emerald has a remarkable nose for the hole.

The putter's black nickel finish could be more durable, and the glossy arrow alignment marks are prone to glare in high sunlight conditions. To my eye, the detail work—including cast edging and paint fill—looks a tad rough. However, mine is one of GEL's first production models, and I suspect that the company will improve upon these shortcomings in future iterations. These things certainly don't affect what counts most, which is performance.

As for the loud brand colors, at least you can't fault GEL for going halfway. While this technicolor ensemble might not appeal to traditionalists, it will likely find friends among the newer generation of stylistically adventurous golfers who take their cues from colorful young pros like Camilo Villegas and Paula Creamer.

The Bottom Line

GEL Golf is one of the best-kept secrets in putting, but if the Emerald is any indication, the company won't be a secret for long. The GEL Emerald boasts phenomenal forgiveness, feel and accuracy. Some may not be able to get past the brash, unconventional look of the Emerald. Those who embrace it, however, will likely sink more putts.

Posted by PutterZone.com at 12:46 AM